

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, JO, EG, SY, US, XF

SUBJECT: TALK WITH KING - SYRIA, EGYPT, JORDAN AND NEXT STEPS

1. FOLLOWING KING'S VISIT TO SYRIA, I HAD LONG TALK WITH HIM AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 25. THIS CABLE COVERS PORTIONS DEALING WITH INTERIM ACCORD, EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN RELATIONS, SYRIAN-JORDAN RELATIONS AND RELATED SUBJECTS.

2. ON INTERIM ACCORD, KING SAYS THAT IF ANYTHING FEELING IS DEEPER IN SYRIA NOW THAN IT WAS TWO WEEKS AGO. SYRIANS VERY DEFINITELY

BELIEVE TERMS OF SINAI ACCORD ARE WAY BEYOND WHAT EGYPT SHOULD HAVE ACCEPTED AND MAKE THE CASE THAT IF US HAS IN MIND SOMETHING LIKE THE SAME TERMS FOR A FEW KILOMETERS ON THE GOLAN (IF THERE IS ANY SUCH POSSIBILITY), THEN US SHOULD FORGET IT. HIS IMPRESSION IS THAT A GOOD PORTION OF THE SYRIAN FEELING HAS TURNED FROM BEING JUST ANTI-ISRAELI AND ANTI-EGYPTIAN TO BEING ANTI-US. THIS HE BELIEVES STEMS IN PART FROM THE EXTENSIVE AND UNFOLDING US "COMMITMENTS" WHICH THE MIDDLE EAST READS ABOUT DAILY IN THE PRESS. THESE "COMMITMENTS" HAVE MADE US A PARTNER DEEPLY IMMERSED IN THE AGREEMENTS IN THE EYES OF THE SYRIANS. THERE IS STILL STRONG FEELING ABOUT THE EGYPTIANS AS WELL.

3. GIVEN THESE STRONG VIEWS, KING SAID THAT HE WAS NOT ABLE TO DO MUCH TO DENT SYRIAN PRESENT APPROACH TO HANDLING THE AGREEMENT. HE SAYS HE ARGUED, BUT THAT SYRIANS NOW HAVE ALMOST MESSIANIC FEELING THAT TO LET DOWN THEIR OPPOSITION TO EGYPT AND THE ACCORD IS CONDEMN

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THE ARAB SIDE TO GREAT FUTURE WEAKNESS IN WHAT EVERY NEGOTIATIONS

COME ALONG. HE URGED RECONCILIATION WITH EGYPT BUT SAYS HE WAS GREETED WITH OBDURACY. BEST HE WAS ABLE TO DO WAS TO TRY TO GET SYRIANS TO KEEP THEIR PUBLIC OPPOSITION UNDER CONTROL. HE URGED THAT THEY DO ALL POSSIBLE TO STAY AWAY FROM PERSONAL ATTACKS ON SADAT. ASAD SAID THAT HE WOULD TRY, BUT THAT AT SOME POINT HE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO ANSWER SOME OF THE POINTS WHICH SADAT COVERED IN HIS SPEECH TO THE ASU. KING ALSO SAID THAT HE URGED ASAD TO CEASE GENERAL ATTACKS ON THE AGREEMENT, AND WHERE IT WAS NECESSARY TO SAY SOMETHING TO ZERO IN ON A SPECIFIC POINT TO WHICH THEY OBJECTED.

4. KING ADDED THAT GIVEN DEPTH OF SYRIAN FEELING HE HAD LITTLE HOPE THAT THINGS COULD BE PATCHED UP VERY QUICKLY OR THAT JORDAN COULD DEVIATE FROM ITS PRESENT POSITION OF SAYING NOTHING FURTHER ON THE AGREEMENT.

5. SAUDIS HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH JORDAN TO GET A READOUR ON THE LATEST TRIP TO SYRIA. THEY HAD SENT A MESSAGE AND ASKED FOR SOMEONE TO COME HERE TO DISCUSS THINGS WITH JORDAN OR AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SEND RIFAI TO SAUDI ARABIA TO READ THEM IN. KING SAID HE HAD LITTLE HOPE THAT SAUDIS COULD DO VERY MUCH IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

6. AS FOR JORDANIAN - EGYPTIAN RELATIONS, HE NOW HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT EGYPTIANS HAD GOTTEN BITTER WITH JORDAN OVER THE STAND WHICH GOJ HAD TAKEN ON THE SINAI ACCORD. HE DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG THAT WOULD

LAST, BUT PRESUMED THAT EGYPTIAN VP HOSNI MUBARAK WOULD NOT BE COMING IN THE NEAR FUTURE. KING SAID THAT HE WAS WELCOME HERE OF COURSE, BUT IF HE CAME IT WAS UP TO EGYPT TO DECIDE WHEN. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ORIGINAL MUBARAK VISIT, SET UP AT EGYPTIAN REQUEST, WAS CANCELLED BECAUSE OF DIFFERENCE WITH JORDAN, BUT PRESENT EGYPTIAN STANCE WAS TO PUT CONSIDERABLE CHILL ON THE RELATIONSHIP.

7. AS FOR SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS, LITTLE SPECIFIC CAME UP IN OUR TALK. KING SAID THAT THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK ALONG SLOWLY TRYING TO IMPROVE SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS AND THAT IT WAS A WORTH-WHILE EFFORT AS LONG AS THE VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES WHICH THEY SETTLED UPON CONTINUED TO PROVIDE BENEFITS FOR THE PEOPLE OF BOTH COUNTRIES. COMMENT: WHILE I CANNOT DOCUMENT THE POINT, I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT JUST A SMALL BIT OF THE ARDOR HAS GONE OUT OF THIS QUEST.

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HOWEVER JORDAN WILL STILL CONTINUE TO TREAT THE RELATIONSHIP AND ITS FUTURE GROWTH AS A SERIOUS OBJECTIVE. JORDAN, IT SEEMS AT THIS POINT, WILL ALSO STILL BE WILLING TO INVEST SOME OF ITS OWN POLITICAL CAPITAL IN THE ENDEAVOR OF CONTINUING TO DEVELOP THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SYRIANS. END COMMENT.

8. AS FOR NEXT STEPS, IN SPITE OF THE HARD NOSED SYRIAN ATTITUDE ON THE SINAI ACCORD, KING BELIEVES ASAD STILL WANTS TO WORK OUT SOME-

THING. HE DID NOT REPEAT WHAT RIFAI TOLD ME EARLIER THAT SYRIANS
WOULD DEMAND A GREAT DEAL OF ISRAEL IN TERMS NOT ONLY OF THE GOLAN,
BUT ALSO SOMETHING FOR THE PALESTINAINA, ON JERUSALEM ETC, BEFORE
BEGINNING TALKS. HE DID SAY THAT HE THOUGHT ASAD WANTED TO GO AHEAD
AND AT THIS POINT WOULD NOT MAKE PROPOSALS BUT WOULD LISTEN TO
WHATEVER OTHERS WERE PREPARED TO SAY.

9. SUGGEST DEPT PASS CAIRO AND DAMASCUS.
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